

Module 3:  
Between Module Readings Reflections

Reading 1: Differentiating the Curriculum for Gifted Students; Berger

Rationale	Gifted students are found in all types of classrooms, and wherever they are found they need appropriately differentiated curriculum designed to address their individual characteristics, needs abilities and interests
Content	Consists of ideas, concepts, descriptive information and facts. Content can be modified through accelerating, compacting, variety, reorganization, flexible pacing and the use of more advanced or complex concepts, abstractions and materials. Students need to be provided with more advanced learning activities, not more of the same, and can be achieved through a multi-disciplinary approach.
Product	Should include a wide variety of forms that reflect both knowledge and the ability to manipulate ideas, and should be consistent with the student's preferred learning style, address real-life problems and audiences; synthesize rather than summarise information and include a self-evaluation.
Management Strategies	Can be by accelerating the mastery of basic skills through testing-out procedures and reorganization of the curriculum according to higher level skills and concepts, by engaging students in problem-finding and problem-solving activities and research, and by providing students opportunities for making connections within and across systems of knowledge by focusing on issues, themes and ideas.
Principles	Should include more elaborate, complex, in-depth student of major ideas, problems, and themes that integrate knowledge within and across systems of thought. Should allow for development and application of productive thinking skills to reconceptualise existing knowledge and generate new knowledge. There are 5 more 'shoulds' on page 27
Process	Activities must be restructured to be more intellectually demanding, ie questions that require higher level responses, open-ended questions that stimulate inquiry, active exploration and discovery, to encourage students to think about subjects in a more abstract way: group interaction and simulations. Flexible pacing, and guided self-management, and tasks based on the use of Bloom's more complex levels of thinking are common approaches to process modification.
Learning environment	Gifted students learn best in receptive, non-judgemental student centred environments that encourage inquiry and independence.

Reading 2: Differentiation for gifted and talented students: Principles and practices; Riley

Rationale	To seek and support individual differences, the curriculum must be tailored to fit the needs of each child based on assessment of the child's characteristics, needs and interests. The one-size fits all delivery system has failed students
Content	The 'what' of concepts, ideas and facts needs to be abstract, complex and varied, organized around concepts, and include a study of the methods of inquiry
Product	The 'why', ie outcomes, needs to allow for choice, be self-selected, appropriately evaluated, should represent a transformation of knowledge via originality, and should be the result of a real problem, addressing a real audience.
Management Strategies	Requires the asking and answering of the two following questions: How do I ensure all students 'know' it? How do I ensure that the objectives have been met? And What do I provide for those who already have this knowledge, skills or concepts?
Principles	That content, product and process differentiation are different from the regular curriculum, and are based on the unique behaviours associated with giftedness.
Process	The 'how' of appropriate methods and strategies needs to be discovery-based, open-ended, metacognitive, involve higher level thinking processes, allow choice, group interaction, pacing and variety.
Learning Environment	Not addressed in this article.

Reading 3: Differentiating instruction for advanced learners in the mixed-ability middle school classroom; Tomlinson

Rationale	A one-size fits all approach does not serve a heterogeneous classroom well.
Content	Is concept focused and principle driven, encouraging advanced learners to expand their understanding and application of key concepts and principles, and inviting teachers to provide varied learning options that stresses understanding and sense-making, not retention and regurgitation.
Product	Teachers should use a variety of options through which students can demonstrate or exhibit what they have learned.
Management Strategies	To help teachers manage differentiation and help students find a good learning fit, teachers should: use multiple texts and supplementary materials, computer programs, interest centres, (independent) learning contracts, compacting, tiered sense-making activities and tiered products, tasks and products designed with a multiple intelligence orientation, complex instruction, group investigation, product criteria negotiated jointly by student and teacher and graduated task-and product-rubrics
Principles	In interest-based adjustments, students have a voice in deciding how they will apply the key ideas learned; in learning profile adjustments, students are encouraged to understand their own learning preferences (metacognition); while in readiness based adjustments teachers offer students a range of learning task that move from the concrete to the abstract; simple to complex; basic to transformational; fewer to multi-faceted; more structured to more open; towards greater independence, in greater leaps, that allows exploration of concepts in greater depth or breadth.
Process	Teachers should use a variety of ways for students to explore the curriculum, a variety of sense-making activities or processes through which students can come to understand and 'own' information and ideas. This can include flexible grouping based on readiness, interests, and learning style.
Learning Environment	Students are active explorers in a student centred classroom, teachers are facilitators of learning, helping students set goals based on their readiness, interests and profile.

#### Reading 4: Acceleration: An Expanded Vision; Mackenzie-Sykes

Rationale	That the pacing of educational programs must be responsive to the competencies and knowledge of individual children; Acceleration is a practical means of matching talented student's educational needs, facilitation the development of study skills and independent learning. It enhances creativity, outstanding achievement, and higher-order thinking skills, and can be justified on social and emotional grounds.
Content	NA
Product	NA
Management Strategies	There are a number of suggestion for the practice of grade-skipping: a comprehensive psychological evaluation of the child's abilities, academic achievement and socio-emotional adjustment should be done; their IQ should be >130, there should be no social or emotional adjustment problems, they should be in good health, and their size should be taken into account. Parents, receiving teacher and child should all have positive attitudes about the acceleration, which should occur at natural transition points; the advancement should be done on a trial basis; and care should be taken to avoid creating excessive expectations.
Principles	'Acceleration is the process of .... bringing gifted an talented youth up to a suitable level of instruction commensurate with their achievement levels and readiness so that they are properly challenged to learn the new material' according to Feldhusen. It should refer to the rapid rate of the child's cognitive development, and should be appropriate curriculum and services at a level commensurate with the gifted child's demonstrated readiness and need.
Process	There are 15 options for acceleration as identified by Southern and Jones, including Early entrance to school; grade skipping or advancement placement; continuous; self-paced instruction; content or subject acceleration; combined classes; curriculum compacting; telescoping curriculum; mentorships; extra-curricular programs; concurrent enrolment; advance placement; credit by examination; correspondence courses; and early entrance into secondary school or university. These are all explained in a bit more detail on pp 41-2.
Learning Environment	NA
Academic performance	Recent investigations show positive educational and cognitive outcomes form acceleration.

Social and emotional development	Despite evidence supporting the benefits of acceleration, it appears that the evidence concerning the impact of acceleration on social and emotional development is not as convincing as the findings regarding its benefits on academic development, and many teachers and practitioners continue to express concerns about recommending early admission for gifted students.
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